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The Importance of Cultural Resources Management for DoD

Native Americans left pictographs and petroglyphs that depicted both humans and animals on many DoD installations in the arid southwestern United States. A major group of these spectacular pictorial records of prehistoric life and activity is preserved at the naval Air Weapons Station China Lake, CA.

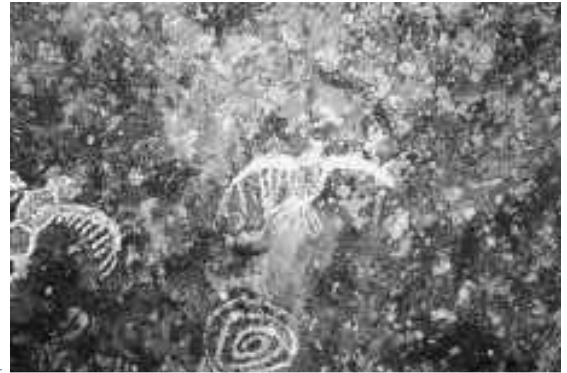
Fort Sam Houston, San Antonio, TX, has nearly 900 historic buildings. In 1991, the fort signed a programmatic agreement to manage its historic resources, including the Band Building. Fort Sam Houston has joined with the Army Corps of Engineers and the National Park Service to provide hands-on training courses for artisans to learn the fine craftwork needed to restore buildings such as this.

The Department of Defense (DoD) manages a wide range of unique cultural resources on its 25 million acres of public lands. Included are buildings, structures, sites, and objects associated with the historical growth and development of the U.S. military, as well as many other elements of American history and prehistory.

Cultural resources under DoD management include the impressive architecture of our military service academies and other historic military installations; Native American rock carvings and archeological sites; pioneer cemeteries, structures, and sites, including remnants of the Oregon Trail; sites and buildings associated with such major efforts as nuclear weapons development and the space program; historic aircraft and ships, including *USS Constitution*; and documents, photographs, uniforms, flags, and other objects associated with our nation's military history. These cultural resources are tangible reminders and symbols of people, events, and ideas that shaped our nation's character.

It is sometimes suggested that the preservation of cultural resources is inconsistent with DoD's military mission. Specific issues include the cost of maintaining historic facilities, the potential impact of archeological sites on the use of training lands, and the proper disposition of artifacts.

Although sound cultural resources management must occasionally cope with all of these challenges and more, such views are short-sighted. What often is not considered are the full range of benefits which properly managed cultural resources can convey. In fact, DoD's cultural resources are important because of their support of military mission goals, their contributions to military history and tradition, and their enhancement of quality of life for the residents, employees, and visitors to DoD installations.



Military Mission Goals

Implicit within DoD's primary mission of "keeping the peace" has been the military's role of protecting America's heritage, including its democratic form of government and way of life, and the natural, social, and cultural evidence of that way of life. Preservation of visible signs of democracy help promote territorial and cultural integrity, both here and overseas, thus serving as a means of nation-building. By recognizing and respecting the symbols of cultural diversity, cultural resources preservation can also promote the integration of different groups of people.

Changing military training and testing needs are less likely to meet local resistance if a military installation has established good relationships with the surrounding civilian community. One area of common interest can be an installation's cultural resources. These resources are often an integral part of the community's cultural heritage, and local citizens value their preservation. If DoD installations are good stewards of their natural and cultural resources and work cooperatively with local communities for their preservation, the installations are more likely to be viewed favorably when controversial issues need to be discussed.

In many cases, sound preservation and reuse of historic facilities can actually contribute to



an installation's cost-savings goal. Although it is frequently assumed that rehabilitating an "old" building is more expensive than new construction, this may not be the case if all costs and benefits are considered. Other economic benefits of re-use include the preservation of higher quality building materials and workmanship, and less total energy consumption, if all energy expenditures are considered.

In addition, cultural resources are protected by a variety of federal laws, including the National Historic Preservation Act, the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act, and the Archeological Resources Protection Act. Early planning for cultural resource protection and management can help installations avoid the costly delays that can result from incomplete compliance with cultural resources preservation laws and regulations.

Military History and Tradition

Cultural resources commemorate and honor our nation's and our military's history. The handsome brick officers' quarters at F.E. Warren Air Force Base (Fort Russell), Wyoming, testify to our military's role in westward expansion. The spires of West Point are symbols of military honor and achievement. The industrial might of the Norfolk Naval Shipyard in Virginia demonstrates the will of the nation to build an arsenal of democracy. And, the runways at Edwards Air Force Base, California, symbolize our striving to go ever higher, and faster, and further. Such places are vivid reminders of the military's role in the history of our country, symbols of strength and sacrifice that have made our nation great.

The preservation of outward manifestations of our cultural heritage provides direct experiences about remote and otherwise inaccessible places, events, and people. Protecting and preserving cultural resources found on these and other military installations is important to:

- know and understand our past;
- recognize and commemorate past events and persons;
- provide a sense of belonging and identity;
- offer an inspiration for future generations;
- foster *esprit de corps* among our military men and women about the history and traditions of military units.

Quality of Life

Maintaining orderly, attractive, stimulating places to live and work contributes to the security of all military personnel, their families, and surrounding communities. Preservation of historic buildings and districts on a military installation, as well as the presence of other cultural resources, creates a strong sense of place and improves the living and working environment.

One important element in supporting a strong quality of life is commitment to good installation design and planning. The historic buildings on many of our military installations are well planned and designed. Recurring landscapes and building types also contribute to an installation's quality of life. For example, the Olmsted Brothers designed the landscape plan for Fort Lewis, Washington, so that the parade ground focused on the distant snowcapped peak of Mount Rainier. The result is one of startling beauty and grandeur.

Many of our military installations are homes to military museums which are visited by thousands of residents and visitors alike. For example, Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio, has been at the forefront of aviation science for nearly 100 years. Wright-Patterson maintains programs to educate both military personnel and the public on the history of its activities. Their museum holds one of the largest collections of aircraft, spacecraft, missiles, and related artifacts in the world. Other DoD museums house world-class collections of archeological artifacts, military memorabilia, and other items.

Other installations use cultural resources to develop on-base programs of public education and scientific inquiry, such as those related to archeological investigations. Base personnel frequently volunteer to assist in such projects.

Summary

Cultural resources under DoD control are significant national assets. Wise stewardship of these resources is DoD's moral and legal obligation. Sound management can benefit mission and other military needs, and also enhance the quality of life for DoD's military and civilian employees.

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Located on Marine Corps Recruit Depot Parris Island, South Carolina, are the remains of the 16th-century Spanish village known as Santa Elena. Considered the finest Spanish colonial archeological site in the eastern United States, Santa Elena has been nominated as a national landmark. MCRD Parris Island has been working with the South Carolina Institute of Archeology and Anthropology since 1979 on excavation projects at Santa Elena.

